

4 Ask before offering new information. See if they are open to learning more information about their areas of concern:

Can I share with you what I learned that helped me feel more comfortable?

YES – Share your understanding

I received this booster [and/or vaccine] fact sheet from [my VA care team or some other source], which you may find helpful.

NO – Acknowledge their reluctance

Offer to share your experience about the booster [and/or vaccine], if appropriate.

My doctor assured me that no corners were cut in developing the vaccines and evaluating their safety and effectiveness and they have now been used by millions of people with few serious side effects.

Whenever your body is exposed to germs, your body makes antibodies in response. Vaccines are a safer way for your body to make antibodies that will protect you from getting seriously ill if you are exposed to dangerous viruses, like COVID-19.

5 Keep the door open for future conversation:

This may mean accepting that they are not ready to consider the booster [and/or vaccine] yet. Expressing understanding makes it more likely they will be open to re-visiting the topic with you or someone else.

You can say something like:

I'm happy to talk to you more about this when you are willing.

Let me know what you think about the fact sheet.

Once you've had a chance to read the fact sheet, I'd be happy to talk with you.

If your loved one is not ready to consider the booster [and/or vaccine], you can say something like:

Thanks for sharing your thoughts on this with me. I'm available if you want to talk more about it at any point.

I appreciate your honesty. Let me know if you want to talk more down the road.

6 If they are open to getting a booster [and/or vaccine]:

If they are open to getting the booster [and/or vaccine], say something like this:

It's great that you are ready to get the booster [and/or vaccine]. Can I help you learn about all the options for getting the booster [and/or vaccine]?

If talking with employees and Veterans:

Some local pharmacies are running out of boosters for the holidays, the VA has plenty of COVID-19 vaccines and boosters.

End with a thank you:

Thanks for having this conversation with me.

I am grateful to have you as a [friend, family member] and want you to know how much I care about your wellbeing.

NOTE: *If they need help with finding vaccine sites, go to Vaccine Finder (www.vaccinefinder.org) or visit the VA COVID-19 Vaccine site (www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine)*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- ▶ How to talk about COVID-19 vaccines with friends and family | CDC
- ▶ Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination | CDC
- ▶ COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shots | CDC
- ▶ Myths and Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC
- ▶ Ensuring COVID-19 Vaccines Work | CDC
- ▶ Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC

COVID-19 VACCINE

How to talk about COVID-19 Boosters with those you care about this holiday season



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



Choose VA

The following will provide some suggestions for having constructive, compassionate conversations with those you care about regarding getting the COVID-19 booster [and/or vaccine].

An important part of this conversation is to listen to the other person’s opinions and their concerns, and make sure they feel heard and understood. Asking open-ended questions, offering your understanding, and empathizing with their concerns can help build trust and help them to consider change. This requires us to accept, without judgement, that our loved ones may have and keep opinions that we disagree with, as well as honor their right to do so.



FOLLOW THESE

6 STEPS

TO HAVE A CONSTRUCTIVE, COMPASSIONATE CONVERSATION

1 Ask permission to talk about it:

Start the conversation with:

I really care about you and want you to stay healthy this holiday season.

Follow-up with a chat about their holiday plans before delving into a discussion about COVID vaccines.

To bring up the topic about COVID-19 booster [and/or vaccine], you can say something like:

Would it be okay to talk about the COVID-19 booster [and/or vaccine]?

YES –
Proceed to step 2

NO – You can say something like:

I received my booster [and/or vaccine], though I understand not everyone feels the same way.

I really respect you and I want to understand your perspective.

2 Explore their thinking about the booster [and/or vaccine]:

You can say something like:

What are your thoughts about getting the COVID-19 booster [and/or vaccine]?

How have you managed to stay safe during the pandemic?

What would help you feel more comfortable with accepting the booster [and/or vaccine]?

3 Express understanding for their concerns, acknowledge what they already do to stay safe, and respond to their concerns with empathy:

I’m glad you have been able to stay healthy and received your initial doses of the COVID-19 vaccine

When concerns are raised, you can say something like:

I hear your concerns and can appreciate how that can make it harder to have trust in the booster [and/or vaccine].

Would you like to hear what helped me to decide to get a booster?

When preventive strategies are mentioned, you can say something like:

It is good to hear you are wearing a mask in crowded indoor spaces.